

Arts and Science Faculty Newsletter

Volume 1 Issue 3

January/February 1996

South African Project Gets Go-Ahead

After many months of preparation, and many months of waiting for the results of the UPCD (University Partnerships in Cooperation and Development) Tier 2 competition, the good news arrived that our project, Establishing a network for quality Human Resource Development, was approved for funding by CIDA, under the management of AUCC.

As already stated in the Thursday Report, it is a project to which I am very personally committed. Lekhotla Mafisa was my graduate student for two years before Dean Valaskakis and I went to South Africa to look at the possibility of entering into an international agreement with the University of the North, QwaQwa branch.

During that visit, we became aware of the problems in education at all levels in QwaQwa (tertiary, secondary, primary, and preschool), as a result of some twenty-five years of isolation from most of the rest of the world during the apartheid regime. We also discovered that there was a very good fit between their needs and the expertise that Concordia could offer. The student clientele at UNIQUWA and at Concordia are very similar: we both have a large proportion of mature students, and provide the opportunity to obtain both undergraduate and graduate degrees on a part-time basis. However, we have a good track record on how to run such programmes, and they are

struggling. They need an injection of help now so that they may develop their own resources and carry on five years from now. UNIQUWA does have the mandate to offer graduate programmes, but when we visited in 1994, there were 2000 students and 6 faculty members in the Faculty of Education. Not all of these faculty members have PhDs. We therefore propose that two candidates for the PhD come to Concordia from the Faculty of Education of UNIQUWA during the four-year period of the project.

QwaQwa is a former black homeland located in the Drakensburg Mountains. It's about a 3½ drive south of

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SCPA to Host Public Forum on Education

The School of Community and Public Affairs will be hosting a public forum/town hall on the "Estates general" on education, sometime in March. The community-at-large is invited to participate, and speakers will include representatives from the education sector - primary/secondary/university; government; parents' associations, etc. Speakers will address the issues that affect their constituency, and a small panel of informed journalists will pose questions before the discussion is opened to the public. Please contact the School at 848-2575 if you would like more information on this event.

News from the Dean's Office

Dean of Arts and Science

Alumni Awards

At the Alumni Awards Reception held on January 18, two Faculty members and two students from the Faculty of Arts and Science were among those receiving awards of excellence. Dr. Sylvia Ruby of the Biology department and Dr. Kim Sawchuk of the Communication Studies department received the Excellence in Teaching awards. Congratulations to them both. Two of our students, Ms. Alexandra Flynn (Economics and Political Science) and Mr. Emerson Thomas, (B.A. Leisure Studies, Diploma in Sports Administration) received Outstanding Students Awards.

Open Meeting of the Faculty

An Open Meeting of the Faculty will be held on both campuses once the Faculty Self-Appraisal Report is received in the Dean's office. It is expected that these meetings will be held in February. Notifications will go out shortly.

Faculty Restructuring

Once the Faculty Self-Appraisal Report has been received, the

Faculty Planning and Priorities Committee will finalize its plan for restructuring the Faculty. It is expected that this plan will be ready by the beginning of March.

Gail Valaskakis
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Vice-Dean Academic Affairs and International Relations

International Relations

Congratulations to Florence Stevens, who has just received a major award under the University Partnerships in Cooperation and Development (UPCD) program administered by AUCC and funded by CIDA. (Please see Dr Stevens' story in this issue for more information about the project.)

Congratulations as well to Enn Raudsepp who has arranged for a \$15,000 donation from former Gazette editor Norman Webster and the Webster Foundation for a program of scholarly collaboration with the Beijing Broadcasting Institute (BBI) in China. Professor Xu Qin Yuan, the first visiting scholar from China to take part in an exchange agreement signed by Concordia's Journalism and Communication Studies departments, has just

arrived in Montreal. Concordia's Ross Perigoe has just returned from a three-month stint teaching at BBI. The departments have hosted two other visiting scholars this past year, Guo Zhenzhi, also from BBI, and Sheng Xigui, from People's University in Beijing.

Summer School on the Topic "Political and Social Quebec"

An agreement reached in September 1995 between the Departments of Political Science of Concordia and Laval has resulted in plans for a summer school in Quebec City. The programme, entitled "Political and Social Quebec", will be offered by Laval. It will give priority to undergraduate students enrolled in political science at Concordia, although it will be open to students enrolled at other Canadian or foreign universities, space permitting.

Summer School themes include: "The State at the Crossroads"; "Quebec, The Capital City"; "Culture and Communication in a Distinct Society" and "Quebec in the World".

The Summer School will feature a number of activities in addition to courses and many of them will be in French: special lectures given by Laval faculty, visits with individuals involved in politics, culture and administration in the

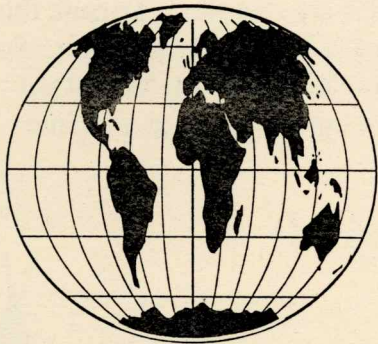
News from the Dean's Office

provincial capital, and discussion and research groups supervised by Laval graduate students.

Under the cooperation agreement, the Concordia Department of Political Science will host Laval graduate students for a semester at a time in its Master's programme in Public Policy and Public Administration.

For more information on the Summer School, contact the Department of Political Science at 2105.

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Vice-Dean Research,
Space and Development

Editorial Policy

This being our third issue of the Arts and Science Newsletter, we are beginning to receive

submissions from the members of our Faculty without having to nag. Thanks for your contributions, BUT, unfortunately, it is not possible for us to include everything: we are trying not to duplicate the Thursday Report's regular (and more frequent) columns, for example "At a Glance", so forgive us if your submission was of that type and you do not find it here. We do like to celebrate the unusual.

The Web

Two months ago I drew your attention to the Arts and Science home page at <http://artsci-cwwin.concordia.ca> and encouraged departments to prepare their own. While there are a couple of new ones, Aaron Brauer (7333 or E-mail to AARONBR@VAX2) tells me he has not been overwhelmed with requests to create accounts! I would be happy to help with some the mechanics of composing the files and placing them on the server though I am far from an expert on the subject. Any department contemplating spending those scarce operating funds on conventional brochures should make sure they have a presence on the World Wide Web first!

The Annual GRF Competition

This year we made 27 awards to individuals or teams competing in the sciences area, and 46 awards to those competing in the area of the social sciences and

humanities. The total value was \$162,462 from the University "CASA" funds and the SSHRC General Grant. (As you may be aware, NSERC no longer provides a general grant.)

As always, the committees have tried to strike a balance between nurturing small-scale but quality scholarship where the financial needs are modest, and supplementing funding for research on the grand scale where there are never as many grants as new ideas. It ain't easy...

Fire Drills

Following a recent fire drill, I received reports from our Fire and Public Safety Officer that several individuals were reluctant to leave buildings. As a co-chair of the University's Central Advisory Health and Safety Committee, I should probably moralize at length to persuade potential delinquents of their folly, but maybe a brief cautionary tale would be more effective: I have just learned that a professor who remained in his office during a fire drill about a year and a half ago has been fined \$250 by the City of Montreal. Scofflaws beware!

Peter Bird
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News from the Dean's Office

Vice-Dean Student Affairs

What a relief. Dr. Dolores Gold called me last November and with two simple words solved a puzzle that had been bothering me for the previous couple of months. The two simple words: Jules Munshin. Of course! It was Jules Munshin who starred with Kelly and Sinatra in *On the Town*, the musical about three sailors who are in New York for some 'R and R'. Now that I have that out of my system, I can get back to today's university version of 'R and R': Retention and Recruitment.

I recently read the report of the Arts & Science Think Tank (chaired by Dr. David Cheeke). The Think Tank has identified a number of very important issues and concerns, only two of which I would like to address briefly here.

First, the report addresses the issue of a gap between entrance requirements and performance standards; and naturally not wanting to bridge the gap by lowering performance standards. It seems clear, then, that we have to do something for those students who meet our minimum entrance requirements but do not have sufficient skills to perform at the level we expect of them. The data are striking.

In each of the last two years, we have had approximately 1000

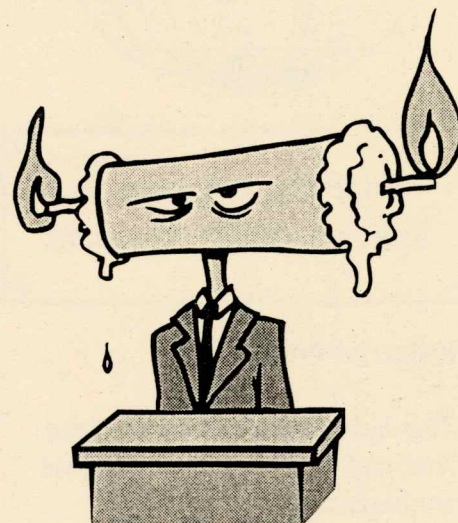
students fall into first level failure status (an annual GPA of 1.49 or less). In 1993/1994, 60% of our first level failure students had accumulated fewer than 30 credits (these students would be roughly equivalent to first year students). In 1994/1995 it was 58.6%. Admittedly, not all of these students are in academic jeopardy because of their academic skills (see below), but the arithmetic quite clearly indicates that there is a sizable number of students that we could be retaining.

There are a number of resources within the university that I believe we have not been exploiting, but would be very useful in helping our students with their academic skills. For example, Continuing Education has an excellent reputation for teaching academic skills. Perhaps we should encourage more active use of the resources at Counselling and Development. And our own TESL department also has a reputation for providing students with skills necessary to succeed. There are several ways and means of cooperating with these units to help our incoming students, all of which deserve careful consideration.

The second issue that I would like to address concerns the Think Tank's discussion of the use of space to facilitate students studying, and meeting other students, faculty and advisors, preferably within an informal context. Precisely. As I have written before, research by Astin

(e.g. 1985) consistently shows that the major factor related to student retention is a factor that he calls 'student involvement'. And student involvement is reliably and consistently influenced by the degree of contact between students and faculty. Space that is devoted to, and used by, students, faculty, advisors, can only lead to a greater feeling of involvement by students.

I would like to extend this point a bit further. Over the past few years, the Office of Student Affairs has been trying to help departments identify students in academic difficulty by printing copies of transcripts of first year students after the December grades are recorded. Despite this effort, a few problems linger. For example, we usually cannot get these transcripts until well into



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February, when students are already half way through their second semester. Also, many students take 6 credit courses exclusively, and so we have no grades at this time. But as well, and as noted above, many students fall into academic jeopardy (or simply leave Concordia), not because of poor academic skills, but because of one or more personal problems, whether emotional, physical, or financial.

We feel that we could help these latter students, and retain them, if we could identify them on time. Currently, our only mechanism for identifying such students is if they come to us. The Associate Deans of Student Affairs of the other Faculties and I have been considering a mass mailing to first year students, inviting them to come visit us. But the sort of space discussed by the Think Tank, designed for informal interactions, could go a long way towards identifying and helping students experiencing nonacademic difficulties.

These are a few thoughts that I have been mulling over recently, and I would greatly appreciate hearing your opinions. I would also like to know if that was Jules Munshin that I saw the other night in *Silk Stockings*.

Jim Jans
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Director of Appraisals

This year marks the end of the first cycle of academic appraisals for Arts and Science. Five of the six for 1994-95 are essentially complete, and the last six - History, Geography, School of Community and Public Affairs, Études françaises, Political Science and Science College - are well underway, with about half of the consultants' visits in the works. We hope to have the last Faculty Committee reports by mid-March.

A revised appraisal process, which will greatly reduce the time and effort involved while producing more focused results, is working its way toward Senate. In the meantime, Andrew Mullins and I thank everyone for their contributions of time and wisdom.

Dennis Dicks
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Vice Dean Academic Planning

The only item I would like to bring to your attention in this issue is a special matter concerning faculty retirement. Within the context of negotiations with CUFA, the University administration has been exploring the possibility of offering a special enhanced early retirement package to eligible faculty members. The enhanced retirement package will likely be available for a short period of time, after which the "window of opportunity" will be closed with very little likelihood that it will be reopened in the near future. You may expect to receive more precise information later this term, and I expect that CUFA will also be communicating with you at the appropriate time.

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David Homel Reçoit le Prix du Gouverneur général (section traduction)

Chargé de cours au Département d'études françaises, où il donne entre autres, régulièrement, des cours de traduction littéraire, M. David Homel s'est mérité le Prix du Gouverneur général 1995 (section traduction) pour sa traduction anglaise (Why Must a Black Writer Write About Sex, Coach House Press, 1994) du roman de Dany Laferrière, Cette grenade dans la main du jeune Nègre est-elle une arme ou un fruit?.

Ce prix vient souligner d'une manière insigne la qualité et l'importance du travail de traducteur littéraire du lauréat qui a traduit une trentaine de romans québécois.

Parallèlement à sa carrière de traducteur littéraire, M. Homel mène depuis 1988 une carrière d'écrivain, qui retient l'attention de la critique. Il est auteur de

trois romans (Electrical Storms, 1988; Rat Palms, 1992 et Sonya & Jack, 1993) qui ont reçu une très bonne couverture de presse et qui ont tous été traduits en français.

David Homel est également très actif dans les milieux littéraires et de la traduction. Il a été membre de plusieurs jurys littéraires et président de l'Association des traducteurs littéraires du Québec.

Le Département félicite vivement David Homel et se réjouit de pouvoir compter sur sa compétence dans la formation des étudiants et étudiantes des programmes de traduction.

*-Pierre L'Hérault, Directeur,
Département d'études françaises*

ISM awarded \$375,000 grant

The Institut des sciences mathématiques (ISM), a collaborative group of mathematics programmes from Concordia, McGill, Université de Montréal, École Polytechnique and l'Université du Québec à Montréal, was recently awarded a grant of \$375,000 over the next three years from the Quebec Ministry of Education.

The ISM, created in 1992, increases cooperation among the five mathematics departments so that graduate students can profit fully from the presence of about 200 Montreal mathematicians. It coordinates ten programmes in different areas in which participating graduate students can work and be advised by professors specializing in these fields, and organizes colloquia and conferences to encourage interactions within the Montreal mathematical community.

Student Affairs Office Wins Bid to Hold Conference on Advising

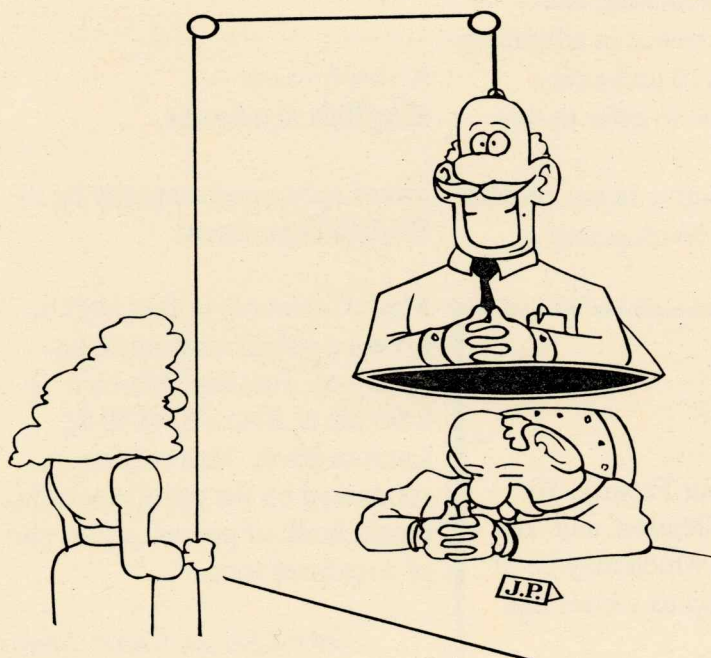
As a result of a proposal that the Student Affairs Office made last summer, the Northeast Region of the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) has selected Montreal as the site to host the 1997 Regional Conference. This is the first time that a NACADA Conference will be held in Canada and over 200 advisers from universities and colleges from the New England states, the Atlantic provinces and Quebec are expected to attend. The theme of the last conference was Academic Advising: Retention Strategies for the 21st Century. We hope that many advisers in the Faculty will appreciate and take advantage of the opportunity to attend the 1997 conference. For further information, please contact Donald Chambers, Coordinator, Registration and Academic Affairs at local 2085.

Accolades for English Students

This year's competition for the Governor General's award in fiction, the highest award of its kind in Canada had on its short list for the award two fiction writers associated with the Department of English at Concordia. Diana Atkinson, an undergraduate student, was short-listed for her novel, Highways and Dancehalls. As far as anyone is able to recall, she is the first undergraduate student ever to be short-listed for this award. Also, Julie Keith was short-listed for the fiction award for her collection of stories, The Jaguar Temple. Ms. Keith is a graduate of the M.A. programme in Creative Writing and The Jaguar Temple began as her M.A. thesis.

In a recent review in the Toronto Globe and Mail of an anthology of newly emerging poets in Canada, Breathing Fire: Canada's New Poets (edited by Crozier and Lane), the Globe's reviewer singled out three poets who stood out from the rest of Canada's young poets as of exceptional calibre and two of the three are products of the Creative Writing programme. Mark Cochrane, graduated with an M.A. in Creative Writing and Carmine Starnino, graduated from the Department undergraduate Creative Writing programme. While a student here, Mark Cochrane won the Irving Layton prize for poetry, an

(Continued on page 8)



Preparing for a Tutorial

Upcoming Events

- The Simone de Beauvoir Institute hosts the second lecture on the theme, "Beyond a B.A. in Women's Studies". Manon Dumas, Director of Employment Services at the YWCA and formerly a Women's Studies graduate at Concordia, will present "Degree in Women's Studies: Career Perspectives", on January 30th at 12:00 noon at the Simone de Beauvoir Institute. Information: 848-2373.
- The Simone de Beauvoir Institute features Gabrielle Pascale, Professor in the département de langue et littérature françaises at McGill University, who will present "The Life and Writings of Simone de Beauvoir" on Monday, February 5, 1996 at 12:00 noon at the Simone de Beauvoir Institute. Information: 848-2373.
- The Department of Sociology and Anthropology presents a Public Lecture on "Origin of Art 35,000 Years Ago" by Dr. Randall White, Professor of Anthropology at New York University and Director of the Institute for Ice Age Studies of New York, on Wednesday, February 7, 1996 at 6:00 p.m. at the DeSève Theatre. Information: 848-2140.
- The Science College presents "Neutrinos: Keys to the Universe" by Dr. Robert Peccei, Dean of the Division of Physical Sciences at UCLA, on Thursday, February 8, 1996 at 8:30 p.m. in H 110. Information: 848-2595.
- The Liberal College presents "Keats and Allusion" by Professor Christopher Ricks, Professor of English at Boston University, on Thursday, February 15, 1996 at 8:30 pm at the Hall Building. Free Admission. Information: 848-2565.

South African Project*(continued from page 1)*

Johannesburg and about a 3 hour drive west of Durham. The attention given to the developing education there has been nothing short of phenomenal. In a ten year period, the government of QwaQwa established a campus of the University of the North, three teacher training colleges, adult learning centres, and 142 schools in an area about the size of the island of Montreal. They did this by devoting 34% of their budget to education, motivated no doubt by the fact that Blacks in the neighbouring Orange Free State could not get an education beyond the age of 10, approximately our grade four.

Staff members in the teacher training colleges are eager to improve their qualifications. Many of them do not have a Masters degree. The second of our proposals is therefore to provide Masters level programmes on-site at QwaQwa. This will enable women as well as men to undertake a graduate degree, without having to leave their

families and their jobs. Needless to say, this is also a much more cost-effective way of providing access to graduate degrees than moving twenty students to Montreal and supporting them for two years.

My colleague, Dr. Ailie Cleghorn, who will be working closely with me on this new project, has herself managed a very successful CIDA project for Concordia in Zimbabwe over the past three years. With her help, we will forge a South-South link between Zimbabwe and South Africa with faculty from the University of Zimbabwe participating in the QwaQwa project.

A third objective of our project is to help UNIQUA develop a bridging programme for students who do not have the paper requirements for entry to higher technical or university education. Concordia, with its long and successful experience in admitting mature students to university studies has much to offer in this area.

The fourth objective in our project is professional development of

teachers in secondary schools, elementary schools, and preschools, with a view to presenting them with new teaching strategies, and updating them on curriculum content. University of Zimbabwe faculty will probably also contribute to the professional development workshops in QwaQwa.

The project has two long-term but related goals: to increase access to higher education for black South Africans; and to increase the quality of instruction in primary and secondary schools. Other benefits include the establishment of collaborative research projects, and the internationalization of teaching and curriculum at each of the partner institutions.

- Florence Stevens, Associate
Professor, TESL

*(Continued from page 7)***English students**

award sponsored annually by the English department.

Mark Cochrane, in fact, will be giving a public reading of his poetry on Tuesday, March 6 at 8:00 pm at Bistro 4, 4040 St. Laurent Blvd. This reading is sponsored by the publisher of his recent book of poems, and is part of a national tour.

-David Sheps, Chair, English

Editor: Peter Bird
Layout and design: Lori Dupuis

This publication is a bi-monthly presentation for our Faculty. We welcome your comments and feedback on this publication, and are interested in your activities, achievements or ideas which may be of interest to the readers of this newsletter. Please drop us a brief line with a telephone number for follow-up at:

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